

Rocky Mountain National Park News Release

July 31, 2005

For Immediate Release

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Search Continues for Missing Park Ranger at Rocky Mountain National Park

Rocky Mountain National Park staff continue their search today for a park ranger that was last seen by his co-workers at 11:00 a.m. at the Chapin Pass Trailhead off Old Fall River Road on Friday, July 29. Jeff Christensen was planning a backcountry patrol to the Lawn Lake Trailhead that evening. He did not contact park dispatch that evening and did not arrive for his shift on Saturday.

An intensive search began early on Saturday morning with over 25 rangers and other park staff covering numerous trails and drainages in the Mummy Range in the northern part of Rocky Mountain National Park. A Bell 407 helicopter from Western Area Power Authority (WAPA) with Department of Energy was involved with taking searchers to key locations and searching by air. Larimer County Search and Rescue assisted yesterday as well.

Another day of intensive searching has begun this morning. Over 50 people are involved today. Along with park staff are Larimer County Search and Rescue, Grand County Search and Rescue, Rocky Mountain Rescue Group, Front Range Rescue Dogs and park volunteers.

Two helicopters are assisting in today's efforts. Along with the WAPA helicopter is a Lama helicopter contracted by the United States Forest Service. This helicopter was brought to the

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Front Range area for fire severity and is currently based out of Fort Collins. Today, the WAPA helicopter is equipped with an infrared device which will be used for its heat seeking capability. The helicopters are being used to preposition searchers and conduct aerial searches.

The Mummy Range is a remote, high altitude, rugged area which includes Mount Chapin, Mount Chiquita, Ypsilon Mountain and Desolation Peaks. There are few designated trails in the area and hiking mainly occurs cross country.

Jeff is 31 years old and is an experienced mountaineer. He is extremely fit and capable of covering long distances in a short period of time. Although Jeff was not intending to spend the night he had a backpack with a variety of gear. He also had a park radio with him, however, in some drainages radio coverage is spotty or his battery could have run out. This is his fourth season as a park ranger at Rocky Mountain National Park. Jeff is an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) and has worked ski patrol at Winter Park for the past 7 years. His hometown is Fraser, Colorado.

Park officials are asking for help from visitors who might have seen Jeff in the Mummy Range area on Friday or Saturday to contact the park at (970) 586-1204 to help determine where he might have been seen last.

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